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MUSEUM-HISTORY AND MUSEUMS OF  
HISTORY

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, IN  
WASHINGTON, D. C., DECEMBER 26-28, 1888

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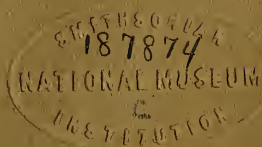
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION IN CHARGE  
OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

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[REPRINTED FROM THE PAPERS OF THE ASSOCIATION]

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NEW YORK  
The Knickerbocker Press  
1889





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## MUSEUM-HISTORY AND MUSEUMS OF HISTORY.

By G. BROWN GOODE, LL.D., Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in charge of the National Museum.

The true significance of the word MUSEUM may perhaps best be brought to our apprehension by an allusion to the ages which preceded its origin—when our ancestors, hundreds of generations removed, were in the midst of those great migrations which peopled Europe with races originally seated farther to the east.

It has been well said that the story of early Greece is the first chapter in the history of the political and intellectual life of Europe.

To the history of Greece let us go for the origin of the museum-idea, which in its present form seems to have found its only congenial home among the European off-shoots of the Indo-Germanic division of the world's inhabitants.

Museums, in the language of ancient Greece, were the homes of the muses. The first were in the groves of Parnassus and Helicon, and later they were temples in various parts of Hellas. Soon, however, the meaning of the word changed, and it was used to describe a place of study, or a school. Athenæus described Athens in the second century as "the museum of Greece," and the name of museum was definitely applied to that portion of the palace of Alexandria which was set apart for the study of the sciences, and which contained the famous Alexandrian library. The museum of Alexandria was a great university, the abiding-place of men of science and letters, who were divided into many companies or colleges, and for whose support a handsome revenue was allotted.



The Alexandrian museum was destroyed in the days of Cæsar and Aurelian, and the term museum, as applied to a great public institution, dropped out of use from the fourth to the seventeenth century. The disappearance of a word is an indication that the idea for which it stood has also fallen into disfavor; and such, indeed, was the fact. The history of museum and library run in parallel lines. It is not until the development of the arts and sciences has taken place, until an extensive written literature has grown up, and a distinct literary and scientific class has been developed, that it is possible for the modern library and museum to come into existence. The museum of the present is more dissimilar to its old-time representative than is our library to its prototype.

There were in the remote past galleries of pictures and sculpture, as well as so-called museums. Public collections of paintings and statuary were founded in Greece and Rome at a very early day. There was a gallery of paintings (*Pinacotheca*) in one of the marble halls of the *Propylæum* at Athens, and in Rome there were lavish public displays of works of art. M. Dezobry, in his "Rome in the time of Augustus," has described this phase of Latin civilization in the first century before Christ:

"For many years," remarks one of his characters, "the taste for paintings has been extending in a most extraordinary manner. In former times they were only to be found in the temples, where they were placed less for purposes of ornament than as an act of homage to the gods; now they are everywhere, not only in temples, in private houses, and in public halls, but also on outside walls, exposed freely to air and sunlight. Rome is one great picture-gallery; the Forum of Augustus is gorgeous with paintings, and they may be seen also in the Forum of Cæsar, in the Roman Forum, under the peristyles of many of the temples, and especially in the porticos used for public promenades, some of which are literally filled with them. Thus everybody is enabled to enjoy them, and to enjoy them at all hours of the day."

The public men of Rome, at a later period in its history, were no less mindful of the claims of art. They believed that the metropolis of a great nation should be adorned with all the best products of civilization. We are told by Pliny that when Cæsar was dictator he purchased, for 300,000 deniers, two Greek paintings, which he caused to be

publicly displayed, and that Agrippa placed many costly works of art in a hall which he built and bequeathed to the Roman people. Constantine gathered together in Constantinople the paintings and sculptures of the great masters, so that the city, before its destruction, became a great museum, like Rome.

The taste for works of art was generally prevalent throughout the whole Mediterranean region in the days of the ancient civilizations, and there is abundant reason to believe that there were prototypes of the modern museum in Persia, Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt, as well as in Rome. Collections in natural history also undoubtedly existed, though we have no positive descriptions of them. Natural curiosities, of course, found their way into the private collections of monarchs, and were doubtless also in use for study among the savants in the Alexandrian museum. Aristotle, in the fourth century before Christ, had, it is said, an enormous grant of money for use in his scientific researches, and Alexander the Great, his patron, "took care to send to him a great variety of zoölogical specimens, collected in the countries which he had subdued," and also "placed at his disposal several thousand persons, who were occupied in hunting, fishing, and making the observations which were necessary for completing his 'History of Animals.'" If human nature has not changed more than we suppose, Aristotle must have had a great museum of natural history.

When the Roman capital was removed to Byzantium the arts and letters of Europe began to decline. The Church was unpropitious, and the invasions of the northern barbarians destroyed every thing. In 476, with the close of the Western Empire, began a period of intellectual torpidity which was to last for a thousand years.

It was in Bagdad and Cordova that science and letters were next to be revived, and Africa was to surpass Europe in the extent of its libraries. In the *Periplus*, or "Voyage of Hanno," occurs the following passage in regard to specimens of Gorillas, or "Gorgones":

"Pursuing them, we were not able to take the men (males); they all escaped, being able to climb the precipices, and defended themselves with pieces of rock. But three women (females), who bit and scratched those who led them, were not willing to follow. However, having killed them, we flayed them, and conveyed the skins to Carthage; for we did not sail any further, as provisions began to fail."<sup>1</sup>

With the Renaissance came a period of new life for collectors. The churches of southern Europe became art galleries, and monarchs and noblemen and ecclesiastical dignitaries collected books, manuscripts, sculptures, pottery, and gems, forming the beginning of collections which have since grown into public museums. Some of these collections doubtless had their first beginnings in the midst of the dark ages, within the walls of feudal castles, or the larger monasteries, but their number was small, and they must have consisted chiefly of those objects so nearly akin to literature as especially to command the attention of bookish men.

As soon as it became the fashion for the powerful and the wealthy to possess collections, the scope of their collections began to extend, and objects were gathered on account of their rarity or grotesqueness, as well as for their beauty or instructiveness. Flourens, in his "*Life and Works of Blumenbach*," remarks: "The old Germany, with its old chateaux, seemed to pay no homage to science; still the lords of these ancient and noble mansions had long since made it a business, and almost a point of honor, to form with care what were called Cabinets of Curiosities."

To the apothecary of old, with his shop crowded with the curious substances used in the medical practice of his day, the museum owes some of its elements, just as the modern botanic garden owes its earliest history to the "*Physic Garden*," which in its time was an outgrowth of the apothecary's garden of simples. The Apothecary in "*Romeo and Juliet*"—

"In whose needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuff'd, and other skins  
Of eel-shaped fishes,"—

was the precursor of the modern museum-keeper. In the hostelrys and taverns, the gathering-places of the people

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<sup>1</sup> OWEN, *Trans. Zool. Soc.*, London, v., p. 266, foot-note.



in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there grew up little museums of curiosities from foreign lands, while in the great fairs were always exhibited sundry gatherings of strange and entertaining objects.

At the middle of the last century there appear to have been several such collections of curiosities in Britain.

In Artedi's ichthyological works there are numerous references to places where he had seen American fishes, especially at Spring Garden (later known as the Vauxhall Garden, a famous place of resort), and at the "Nag's Head," and the "White Bear," and the Green Dragon in Stepney, in those days a famous hostelry in London. He speaks also of collections at the houses of Mr. Lillia and in that of Master Saltero (the barber-virtuoso, described by Bulwer in his "Devereux"), in Chelsea and at Stratford, and also in the collection of Seba, in Amsterdam, and in that of Hans Sloane.

With the exception of "*the monk* or *Angel-fish, Anglis, aliis Mermaid-fish,*" probably a species of *Squatina*, which he saw at the Nag's Head, all the fishes in these London collections belonged to the order Plectognathi.

Josselyn, in his "Two Voyages to New England" (1638-73), after telling us how a Piscataway colonist had the fortune to kill a Pilhannaw—the king of the birds of prey—continues, "How he disposed of her I know not, but had he taken her alive and sent her over into England, neither Bartholomew or Sturbridge Fair could have produced such another sight."

Shakespeare's mirror strongly reflects the spirit of the day. When Trinculo, cast ashore upon a lonesome island, catches a glimpse of Caliban, he exclaims :

"What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell. . . . A strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver; there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."

The idea of a great national museum of science and art was first worked out by Lord Bacon in his "New Atlantis," a philosophical romance published at the close of the

seventeenth century. The first scientific museum actually founded was that begun at Oxford in 1667, by Elias Ashmole, still known as the Ashmolean Museum, composed chiefly of natural-history specimens, collected by the botanists Tradescant, father and son, in Virginia, and in the north of Africa. Soon after, in 1753, the British Museum was established by act of Parliament, inspired by the will of Sir Hans Sloane, who, dying in 1749, left to the nation his invaluable collection of books, manuscripts, and curiosities.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the great national museums of Europe had their origin in the private collections of monarchs. France claims the honor of having been the first to change a royal into a national museum, when, in 1789, the Louvre came into the possession of a republican government. It is very clear, however, that democratic England, by its action in 1753, stands several decades in advance,—its act, moreover, being one of deliberate founding rather than a species of conquest.

The first chapter in the history of American museums is short. In colonial days there were none. In the early years of the Republic, the establishment of such institu-

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<sup>1</sup> The collections of Sloane, who was one of the early scientific explorers of America, were like those of the Tradescant's, contained many New-World specimens, and the British Museum as well as the Ashmolean was built around a nucleus of American material. Indeed, we cannot doubt that interest in American exploration had largely to do with the development of natural history museums.

In those days all Europe was anxious to hear of the wonders of the new-found continent, and to see the strange objects which explorers might be able to bring back with them, and monarchs sought eagerly to secure novelties in the shape of animals and plants.

Columbus was charged by Queen Isabella to collect birds, and it is recorded that he took back to Spain the skins of several kinds of animals. Even to this day may be seen, in the old collegiate church in Siena, a votive offering, placed there nearly four centuries ago by the discoverer of America. It consists of the armor worn by him when he first stepped upon the soil of the New World, and the rostrum of a swordfish killed on the American coast.

The state papers of Great Britain contain many entries of interest in this connection. King James I. was an enthusiastic collector. December 15, 1609, Lord Southampton wrote to Lord Salisbury that he had told the King about Virginia squirrels brought into England, which were said to fly. The King



tions by city, State, or Federal government would not have been considered a legitimate act. When the general government came into the possession of extensive collections as the result of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition in 1842, they were placed in charge of a private organization, the National Institution, and later, together with other similar materials, in that of a corporation, the Smithsonian Institution, which was for a long period of years obliged to pay largely for their care out of its income from a private endowment. It was not until 1876, however, that the existence of a *National Museum*, as such, was definitely recognized in the proceedings of Congress, and its financial support fully provided for.

In early days, however, our principal cities had each a public museum, founded and supported by private enterprise. The earliest general collection was that formed at Norwalk, Connecticut, prior to the Revolution, by a man named Arnold, described as "a curious collection of American birds and insects." This it was which first awakened the interest of President Adams in the natural sciences. He visited it several times as he travelled from Boston to

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very earnestly asked if none were provided for him—whether Salisbury had none for him—and said he was sure Salisbury would get him one. The writer apologises for troubling Lord Salisbury, "but" continued he, "you know so well how he (the king) is affected to such toys."

Charles I. appears to have been equally curious in such matters. In 1637 he sent John Tradescant, the younger, to Virginia "to gather all rarities of flowers, plants, and shells."

\*In 1625 we find Tradescant writing to one Nicholas that it is the Duke of Buckingham's pleasure that he should deal with all merchants from all places, but especially from Virginia, Bermuda, Newfoundland, Guinea, the Amazons, and the East Indies for all manner of rare beasts, fowls and birds, shells and shining stones, etc.

In the Domestic Correspondence of Charles I. in another place, July, 1625, is a "Note of things desired from Guinea, for which letters are to be written to the merchants of the Guinea Company." Among other items referred to are "an elephant's head, with the teeth very large; a river-horse's head; strange sorts of fowls; birds' and fishes' skins; great flying and sucking fishes; all sorts of serpents; dried fruits, shining stones, etc." Still further on is a note of one Jeremy Blackman's charge—in all, £20—for transporting four deer from Virginia, including corn and a place made of wood for them to lie in.

Philadelphia, and his interest culminated in the foundation of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.<sup>1</sup> In 1790 Dr. Hosack brought to America from Europe the first cabinet of minerals ever seen on this continent.

The earliest public establishment, however, was the "Philadelphia Museum," established by Charles Wilson Peale in 1785, which had for a nucleus a stuffed paddle-fish and the bones of a mammoth, and which was for a time housed in the building of the American Philosophical Society. In 1800 it was full of popular attractions.

"There were a mammoth's tooth from the Ohio, and a woman's shoe from Canton; nests of the kind used to make soup of, and a Chinese fan six feet long; bits of asbestos, belts of wampum, stuffed birds and feathers from the Friendly Islands, scalps, tomahawks, and long lines of portraits of great men of the Revolutionary War. To visit the museum, to wander through the rooms, play upon the organ, examine the rude electrical machine, and have a profile drawn by the physiognomitian, were pleasures from which no stranger to the city ever refrained."

Dr. Hare's oxyhydrogen blow-pipe was shown in this museum by Mr. Rubens Peale as early as 1810.

The Baltimore Museum was managed by Rembrandt Peale, and was in existence as early as 1815 and as late as 1830.

Earlier efforts were made, however, in Philadelphia. Dr. Chovet, of that city, had a collection of wax anatomical models made by him in Europe, and Prof. John Morgan, of the University of Pennsylvania, who learned his methods from the Hunters in London and Sué in Paris, was also forming such a collection before the Revolution.

The Columbian Museum and Turrell's Museum, in Boston, are spoken of in the annals of the day, and there was a small collection in the attic of the State House in Hartford.

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<sup>1</sup> "This collection," we are told, "was sold to Sir Ashton Lever, in whose apartments in London Mr. Adams saw it again, and felt a new regret at our imperfect knowledge of the productions of the three kingdoms of nature in our land. In France his visits to the museums and other establishments, with the inquiries of Academicians and other men of science and letters respecting this country, and their encomiums on the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, suggested to him the idea of engaging his native State to do something in the same good but neglected cause."—KIRTLAND, *Mem. American Academy of Sciences*, Boston, I., xxii.

The Western Museum, in Cincinnati, was founded about 1815, by Robert Best, M.D., afterwards of Lexington, Ky., who seems to have been a capable collector, and who contributed matter to Godman's "American Natural History." In 1818 a society styled the "Western Museum Society" was organized among the citizens, which, though scarcely a scientific organization, seems to have taken a somewhat liberal and public-spirited view of what a museum should be. With the establishment of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia in 1812, and the New York Lyceum of Natural History, the history of American scientific museums had its true beginning.

The intellectual life of America is so closely allied to that of England, that the revival of interest in museums, and in popular education at the middle of the present century is especially significant to us. The great Exhibition of 1851 was one of the most striking features of the industrial revolution in England, that great transformation which, following closely upon the introduction of railroads, turned England feudal and agricultural, into England democratic and commercial.

The great Exhibition marked an epoch in the intellectual progress of English-speaking people. "The great Exhibition," writes a popular novelist, and a social philosopher as well, "did one great service for country people: it taught them how easy it is to get to London, and what a mine of wealth, especially for after-memory and purposes of conversation, exists in that great place."

Under the wise administration of the South Kensington staff a great system of educational museums has been developed all through the United Kingdom.

Our own Centennial Exhibition in 1876 was almost as great a revelation to the people of the United States. The thoughts of the country were opened to many things before undreamed of. One thing we may regret—that we have no such widespread system of museums as that which has developed in the motherland with South Kensington as its administrative centre. England has had nearly forty years



however, and we but thirteen, since our Exhibition. May we not hope that within a like period of time, and before the year 1914, the United States may have attained the position which England now occupies, at least in the respects of popular interest and substantial governmental support? There are now over one hundred and fifty public museums in the United Kingdom, all active and useful.

The museum systems of Great Britain are, it seems to me, much closer to the ideal which America should follow, than are those of either France or Germany. They are designed more thoughtfully to meet the needs of the people, and are more intimately intertwined with the policy of national popular education.

Sir Henry Cole, the working founder of the "Department of Science and Art," speaking of the purpose of the museums under his care, said to the people of Birmingham in 1874:

"If you wish your schools of Science and Art to be effective, your health, the air, and your food to be wholesome, your life to be long, your manufactures to improve, your trade to increase, and your people to be civilized, you must have Museums of Science and Art, *to illustrate the principles of life, health, nature, science, art and beauty.*"

Again, in words as applicable to Americans of to-day as to Britons in 1874, said he:

"A thorough education, and a knowledge of science and art are vital to the nation, and to the place it holds at present in the civilized world. Science and art are the life-blood of successful production. All civilized nations are running a race with us, and our national decline will date from the period when we go to sleep over the work of education, science, and art. What has been done is at the mere threshold of the work yet to be done."

The people's museum should be much more than a house full of specimens in glass cases. It should be a house full of ideas, arranged with the strictest attention to system. I once tried to express this thought by saying: "*An efficient educational museum may be described as a collection of instructive labels, each illustrated by a well selected specimen.*"

The museum, let me add, should be more than a collection of specimens, well arranged and well labelled. Like

the library it should be under the constant supervision of one or more men, well informed, scholarly, and withal practical, and fitted by tastes and training to aid in the educational work. I should not organize the museums primarily for the use of people in their larval or school-going stage of existence. The public school-teacher, with the illustrated text-books, diagrams, and other appliances, has in these days a professional outfit which is usually quite sufficient to enable him to teach his pupils.

School-days last at the most only from four to fifteen years, and they end, with the majority of mankind, before their minds have reached the stage of growth most favorable for the reception and assimilation of the best and most useful thought. Why should we be crammed in the time of infancy and kept in a state of mental starvation during the period which follows, from maturity to old age—a state which is disheartening and unnatural all the more because of the intellectual tastes which have been stimulated and partially formed by school life?

The museum-idea is much broader than it was fifty or even twenty-five years ago. The museum of to-day is no longer a chance assemblage of curiosities, but rather a series of objects selected with reference to their value to investigators, or their possibilities for public enlightenment. The museum of the future may be made one of the chief agencies of the higher civilization.

I hope that the time will come when every town shall have both its public museum and its public library, each with a staff of competent men, mutually helpful, and contributing largely to the intellectual life of the community.

The museum of the future in this democratic land should be adapted to the needs of the mechanic, the factory operator, the day-laborer, the salesman, and the clerk, as much as to those of the professional man and the man of leisure. It is proper that there be laboratories and professional libraries for the development of the experts who are to organize, arrange, and explain the museums.

It is proper that laboratories be utilized to the full.

est extent for the credit of the institution to which they belong. No museum can do good and be respected which does not each year give additional proofs of its claims to be considered a centre of learning. On the other hand, the public have a right to ask that much shall be done directly in their interest. They will gladly allow the museum officer to use part of his time in study and experiment. They will take pride in the possession by the museum of tens of thousands of specimens, interesting only to the specialist, hidden away perpetually from public view, but necessary for proper scientific research. They are the foundations of the intellectual superstructure which gives to the institution its proper standing.

Still no pains must be spared in the presentation of the material in the exhibition halls. The specimens must be prepared in the most careful and artistic manner, and arranged attractively in well designed cases and behind the clearest of glass. Each object must bear a label giving its name and history so fully that all the probable questions of the visitor are answered in advance. Books of reference must be kept in convenient places. Colors of walls, cases, and labels must be restful and quiet, and comfortable seats must be everywhere accessible, for the task of the museum visitor is a weary one at best.

All intellectual work may be divided into two classes, the one tending toward the increase of knowledge, the other toward its diffusion; the one toward investigation and discovery, the other toward the education of the people and the application of known facts to promoting their material welfare. The efforts of learned men and of institutions of learning are sometimes applied solely to one of these departments of effort,—sometimes to both, and it is generally admitted, by the most advanced teachers, that, for their students as well as for themselves, the happiest results are reached by carrying on investigation and instruction simultaneously. Still more is this true of institutions of learning. The college which imparts only second-hand knowledge to its students belongs to a period in the history of education which is fast being left behind.



The museum must, in order to perform its proper functions, contribute to the advancement of learning, through the increase as well as through the diffusion of knowledge.

We speak of "educational" museums and of the "educational" method of installation so frequently that there may be danger of inconsistency in the use of the term. An educational museum, as it is usually spoken of, is one in which an attempt is made to teach the unprofessional visitor of an institution for popular education, by means of labelled collections, and it may be, also, by popular lectures. A college museum, although used as an aid to advanced instruction, is not an "educational museum" in the ordinary sense, nor does a museum of research, like the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge, Massachusetts, belong to this class, although, to a limited extent, it attempts and performs popular educational work in addition to its other functions.

In the National Museum in Washington the collections are divided into two great classes: the exhibition series, which constitutes the educational portion of the museum, and is exposed to public view, with all possible accessories for public entertainment and instruction; and the study series, which is kept in the scientific laboratories, and is rarely examined except by professional investigators.

In every properly conducted museum the collections must, from the very beginning, divide themselves into these two classes, and in planning for its administration, provision should be made, not only for the exhibition of objects in glass cases, but for the preservation of large collections not available for exhibition, to be used for the studies of a very limited number of specialists. Lord Bacon, who, as we have noticed, was the first to whom occurred the idea of a great museum of science and art, complains thus, centuries ago, in his book "On the Advancement of Learning," that up to that time the means for intellectual progress had been used exclusively for "amusement" and "teaching," and not for the "augmentation of science."

The boundary line between the library and the museum is neither straight nor plain. The former, if its scope be

rightly indicated by its name, is, primarily, a place for books. The latter is a depository for objects of every kind, books not excepted. The British Museum, with its libraries, its pictures, its archæological galleries, its anthropological, geological, botanical, and zoölogical collections, is an example of the most comprehensive interpretation of the term. Professor Huxley has described the museum as "a consultative library of objects." This definition is suggestive but unsatisfactory. It relates only to the contents of the museum as distinguished from those of the library, and makes no reference to the differences in the methods of their administration.

The treasures of the library must be examined one at a time, and by one person at a time. Their use requires long-continued attention, and their removal from their proper places in the system of arrangement. Those of the museums are displayed to public view in groups, in systematic sequence, so that they have a collective as well as an individual significance. Furthermore, much of their meaning may be read at a glance. The museum cultivates the powers of observation, and the casual visitor even makes discoveries for himself, and, under the guidance of the labels, forms his own impressions. In the library one studies the impressions of others.

The library is most useful to the educated; the museum to educated and uneducated alike, to the masses as well as to the few, and is a powerful stimulant to intellectual activity in either class.

The influence of the museum upon a community is not so deep as that of the library, but extends to a much larger number of people. The National Museum in Washington has 300,000 visitors a year, each of whom carries away a certain number of new thoughts.

The two ideas may be carried out, side by side, in the same building, and, if need be, under the same management, not only without antagonism, but with advantage. That the proximity of a good library is absolutely essential to the influence of a museum, will be admitted by every

one. I am confident, also, that a museum wisely organized and properly arranged is certain to benefit the library near which it stands in many ways, and more positively than through its power to stimulate interest in books, and thus to increase the general popularity of the library and to enlarge its endowment.

Many books and valuable ones would be required in this best kind of museum work, but it is not intended to enter into competition with the library. When necessary, volumes might be duplicated. It is very often the case, however, that books are more useful and safer in the museum than on the library shelves,—for in the museum they may be seen daily by thousands, while in the library their very existence is forgotten by all except their custodian.

Audubon's "Birds of North America" is a book which every one has heard of and which every one wants to see at least once in his lifetime. In a library, it probably is not examined by ten persons in a year. In a museum, if the volume were exposed to view in a glass case, a few of the most striking plates detached, framed, and hung upon the wall near at hand, it will teach a lesson to every passer-by.

The library may be called upon for aid by the museum in many directions. Pictures are often better than specimens to illustrate certain ideas. The races of man and their distribution can only be shown by pictures and maps. Atlases of ethnological portraits and maps are out of place in a library if there is a museum near by in which they can be displayed. They are not even members of the class described by Lamb as "books which are not books." They are not books, but museum specimens, masquerading in the dress of books.

In selecting courses for the development of a museum, it may be useful to consider what are the fields open to museum work. As a matter of convenience museums are commonly classed in two groups—those of science and those of art, and in Great Britain the great national system is mainly under the control of "The Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education."



This classification is not entirely satisfactory, since it is based upon methods of arrangement, rather than upon the nature of the objects to be arranged, and since it leaves in a middle territory (only partially occupied by the English museum men of either department), a great mass of museum material, of the greatest moment, both in regard to its interest and its adaptability for purposes of public instruction.

On the one side stand the natural-history collections, undoubtedly best to be administered by the geologist, botanist, and zoölogist. On the other side are the fine-art collections, best to be arranged, from an æsthetic standpoint, by artists. Between is a territory which no English word can adequately describe—which the Germans call *Culturgeschichte*—the natural history of civilization, of man and his ideas and achievements. The museums of science and art have not yet learned how to partition this territory.

An exact classification of museums is not at present practicable, nor will it be until there has been some redistribution of the collections which they contain. It may be instructive, however, to pass in review the principal museums of the world, indicating briefly their chief characteristics.

Every great nation has its museum of natural history. The Natural History Department of the British Museum, recently removed from the heart of London to palatial quarters in South Kensington, is probably the most extensive,—with its three great divisions, Zoölogical, Botanical, and Geological.

The historian and the naturalist have met upon common ground in the field of anthropology. The anthropologist is, in most cases, historian as well as naturalist; while the historian of to-day is always in some degree an anthropologist, and makes use of many of the methods at one time peculiar to the natural sciences. The museum is no less essential to the study of anthropology than to that of natural history. The library formerly afforded to the historian all necessary opportunities for work. It would seem from the wording

of the new charter of the American Historical Association that its members consider a museum to be one of its legitimate agencies.

Your Secretary has invited me to say something about the possibilities of utilizing museum methods for the promotion of historical studies. This I do with much hesitation, and I hope that my remarks may be considered as suggestions rather than as expressions of definite opinion. The art of museum administration is still in its infancy, and no attempt has yet been made to apply it systematically to the development of a museum of history. Experiment is as yet the museum-administrator's only guide, and he often finds his most cherished plans thoroughly impracticable. That museums can ever be made as useful to history as they are to physical science, their most enthusiastic friend dares not hope. The two departments of science are too unlike.

The historian studies events and their causes; the naturalist studies objects and the forces by which their existence is determined. The naturalist may assemble in a museum objects from every quarter of the globe and from every period of the earth's history. Much of his work is devoted to the observation of finished structure, and for this purpose his specimens are at all times ready. When, however, he finds it necessary to study his subject in other aspects, he may have recourse to the physical, chemical, and physiological laboratories, the zoölogical and botanical gardens and aquaria, which should form a part of every perfect museum system. Here, almost at will, the phenomena of nature may be scrutinized and confirmed by repeated observation, while studies impracticable in the nursery may usually be made by members of its staff, who carry its appliances with them to the seashore or to distant lands.

The requirements of the historian are very different. Nevertheless I am confident that the museum may be made in his hands a most potent instrumentality for the promotion of historical studies. Its value is perhaps less fully realized than it would be were it not that so many of its

functions are performed by the library. In the library may be found descriptive catalogues of all the great museums, and books by the hundred copiously illustrated with pictures of the objects preserved in museums. A person trained to use books may by their aid reap the advantage of many museums without the necessity of a visit to one.

The exhibition series would be proportionately larger in an historical than in a natural-history museum. The study series of a historical museum would mostly be arranged in the form of a library, except in some special departments, such as numismatics, and when a library is near might be entirely dispensed with.

The adoption of museum methods would be of advantage to the historian in still another way, by encouraging the preservation of historical material not at present sought for by librarians, and by inducing present owners of such material to place it on exhibition in public museums.

Although there is not in existence a general museum of history arranged on the comprehensive plan adopted by natural-history museums, there are still many historical collections of limited scope, which are all that could be asked, and more.

The value to the historian of archæological collections, historic and pre-historic, has long been understood. The museums of London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome need no comment. In Cambridge, New York, and Washington are immense collections of the remains of man in America in the pre-Columbian period,—collections which are yearly growing in significance, as they are made the subject of investigation, and there is an immense amount of material of this kind in the hands of institutions and private collectors in all parts of the United States.

The museum at Naples shows, so far as a museum can, the history of Pompeii at one period. The museum of St. Germain, near Paris, exhibits the history of France in the time of the Gauls and of the Roman occupation. In Switzerland, especially at Neuchatel, the history of the inhabitants of the Lake Dwellings is shown.



American ethnological museums are preserving with care the memorials of the vanishing race of red men. The George Catlin Indian Gallery, which is installed in the room in which this Society is now meeting, is valuable beyond the possibility of appraisement, in that it is the sole record of the physical characters, the costumes, and the ceremonies of several tribes long extinct.

Other countries recently settled by Europeans are preserving the memorials of the aboriginal races, notably the colonies in Australia and New Zealand. Japan is striving to preserve in its government museum examples of the fast disappearing memorials of feudal days.

Ethnographic museums are especially numerous and fine in the northern part of Europe. They were proposed more than half a century ago, by the French geographer, Jomard, and the idea was first carried into effect about 1840, on the establishment of the Danish Ethnographical Museum, which long remained the best in Europe. Within the past twenty years there is an extraordinary activity in this direction.

In Germany, besides the chief museum in Berlin, considerable ethnographical collections have been founded in Hamburg and Munich. Austria has in Vienna two for ethnography, the Court Museum (Hof-Museum), and the Oriental (Orientalisches Museum). Holland has reorganized the National Ethnographical Museum (Rijks Ethnographisch Museum) in Leyden, and there are smaller collections in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. France has founded the Trocadero (Musée de Trocadero). In Italy there is the important Pre-historic and Ethnographic Museum (Museo preistorico ed etnografico) in Rome, as well as the collection of the Propagando, and there are museums in Florence and Venice.

Ethnographical museums have also been founded in Christiania and Stockholm, the latter of which will include the rich material collection by Dr. Stolpe on the voyage of the frigate "Vanadis" around the world.

In England there is less attention to the subject,—the

Christy collection in the British Museum being the only one specially devoted to ethnography, unless we include also the local Blackmore Museum at Salisbury.

In the United States the principal establishment arranged on the ethnographic plan is the Peabody Museum of Archæology in Cambridge, and there are important smaller collections in the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Peabody Academy of Sciences at Salem.

The ethnological collections in Washington are classified on a double system: in one of its features corresponding to that of the European; in the other like the famous Pitt-Rivers collection at Oxford, arranged to show the evolution of culture and civilization without regard to race. This broader plan admits much material excluded by the advocates of ethnographic museums, who devote their attention almost exclusively to the primitive or non-European peoples.

In close relation to the ethnographic museums are those which are devoted to some special field of human thought and interest. Most remarkable among these probably is the Musée Guimet, recently removed from Lyons to Paris, which is intended to illustrate the history of religious ceremonial among all races of men.

Other good examples of this class are some of those in Paris, such as the Musée de Marine, which shows not only the development of the merchant and naval marines of the country, but also, by trophies and other historical souvenirs, the history of the naval battles of the nation.

The Musée d' Artillerie does for war, but less thoroughly, what the Marine Museum does in its own department, and there are similar museums in other countries.

Historical museums are manifold in character, and of necessity local in interest. Some relate to the history of provinces or cities. One of the oldest and best of these is the Märkisch Provinzial Museum in Berlin. Many historical societies have collections of this character.

There are museums which illustrate the history of par-

ticular towns, events, and individuals. The museum of the city of Paris, in the Hôtel des Invalides, is one of these. The museum of the Hohenzollerns, in Berlin, contains interesting mementoes of the reigning family of Germany. The cathedrals of southern Europe, and St. Paul's, in London, are in some degrees national or civic museums. The Galileo Museum in Florence, the Shakespeare Museum at Stratford, are good examples of the museums devoted to the memory of representative men and the Monastery of St. Mark, in Florence, does as much as could be expected of any museum for the life of Savonarola. The Soane Museum in London, the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, are similar in purpose and result, but they are rather biographical than historical. There are also others which illustrate the history of a race, as the Bavarian National Museum in Nuremberg.

The study of civilization, or the history of culture and of the developments of the various arts and industries have brought into being special collections, which are exceedingly significant and useful. Dr. Klemm and Gen. Pitt-Rivers, in England, were pioneers in the founding of collections of this kind, and their work is permanently preserved in the Museum für Völkerkunde, in Leipzig and at the University of Oxford.

Nearly every museum which admits ethnological material is doing something in this direction. There are a number of beginnings of this sort in this very building.

The best of the art museums are historically arranged, and show admirably the development of the pictorial and plastic arts—some, like that in Venice, for a particular school; some that of a country, some that of different countries side by side.

The art museum, it need scarcely be said, contains, more than any other, the materials which I should like to see utilized in the historical museum.

Incidentally or by direct intention, a large collection of local paintings, such as those in Venice or Florence, brings vividly into mind the occurrences of many periods of his-



tory, not only historical topography, the architecture, the utensils, weapons, and other appurtenances of domestic, military, ecclesiastical, and governmental routine, but the men and women who made the history, the lowest as well as the most powerful, and the very performers of the deeds themselves, the faces bearing the impress of the passions by which they were moved.

These things are intelligible to those who are trained to observe them. To others they convey but half the lesson they might, or mayhap only a very small part indeed.

The historical museums now in existence contain, as a rule, chance accumulations, like too many natural-history museums of the present, like all in the past. I do not mean any disrespect by the word *chance*—but simply that, though the managers are willing to expend large sums for any specimens which please them, many most instructive ones have been excluded by some artificial limitation. The National Portrait Gallery in London is an instance. Many illustrious men are not represented upon its walls, solely because no contemporary pictures of theirs, reaching a certain ideal standard of merit, are in existence.

So, also, the collection of musical instruments at South Kensington, which admits no specimen which is devoid of artistic suggestions—thus barring out the rude and primitive forms which would give added interest to all. The naturalist's axiom, "any specimen is better than no specimen," should be borne in mind in the formation of historical museums, if not rigidly enforced.

Another source of weakness in all museums is one to which attention has already been directed, namely, that they have resigned, without a struggle, to the library material invaluable for the completion of their exhibition series. Pictures are quite as available for museum work as specimens, and it is unwise to leave so many finely illustrated books, lost to sight and memory, on the shelves of the libraries.

That libraries can do good work through the adoption of museum methods has been clearly shown in the British

Museum in the exceedingly instructive collections which have of late years been exhibited by its librarians, to illustrate such subjects as the lives of Luther and Michelangelo, and by their permanent display of pictures and documents referring to the history of London.

The Dyce-Forster collection of autograph documents, letters, and manuscripts is also, in its own way, suggestive. Every large library has done something of this kind in its own way. It remains for some student of history to work out upon a generous plan, and with plenty of exhibition space at his command, the resources which are already in the possession of some great treasure-house like the British Museum.

What the limitations of historical museums are to be it is impossible at present to predict. In museum administration experience is the only safe guide. In the scientific museum many things have been tried, and many things are known to be possible. In the historical museum most of this experimental administration still remains to be performed. The principal object of this communication is to call attention to the general direction in which experiment should be made.

The only safe course to be pursued in the development of plans in any untried department of museum work is to follow the advice which the Apostle Paul proffered to the Thessalonians:

“PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD!”







